

## **PSCI 556: Political Institutions and Behavior**

Spring 2025  
Tuesday 12:30pm – 3:15pm  
329 Harkness

Professor Bonnie Meguid  
306 Harkness Hall  
Office Hours: Wednesdays 10am-12pm  
Email: [bonnie.meguid@rochester.edu](mailto:bonnie.meguid@rochester.edu)

This seminar will introduce you to classic as well as contemporary research on comparative institutions and behavior. The course will provide good grounding in an array of topics in these areas, while highlighting the range of methodological approaches employed in the field. This course is one of the four required courses in the comparative politics Ph.D. field sequence and will be open to any PhD student and advanced undergraduate, by instructor permission.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

This course is a seminar. Students are expected to actively contribute to the discussion each and every week. This necessitates a careful reading of each article/chapter prior to the class. In preparing for class, students should think carefully about both the substantive and methodological aspects of each reading individually and in comparison with each other. Students are expected to attend every class, unless they are sick. Each week, students must submit two questions about the readings that can serve as a basis for class discussion. These must be submitted by email by midnight the evening before class.

In four weeks of the student's choosing (starting with week 2), the student is also expected to write a short response paper, critically discussing of some or all of the readings (not just one). These are not meant to be just a summary of each reading. They could critically examine the readings' arguments, compare the readings' findings and contribution to a larger puzzle in the literature and/or present the strengths and weaknesses of the research design and data used. These response papers should be 300 to 400 words and are also due by midnight the night before class. At least two of the four papers must be completed by or including Week 9.

In addition, the students will each write a research paper within the topic of comparative institutions and behavior. As part of that process, the students will write a 2 page proposal, identifying the research question, situating the question in the relevant literature, describing the evidence to be assessed (i.e., data to be used, type of analyses), and expectations about the findings. This is due March 4 and will be discussed with the Professor in meetings following Spring Break. The final research paper will be due on May 5.

Grades will be based on general class discussion (18%); 4 response papers (8% each for a total of 32%); a research proposal (10%); and final research paper (40%). Undergraduate students in the class may, with prior permission, opt for a final exam instead of a research proposal and paper.

## **Late Policies**

\*\*Barring extraordinary circumstances, late response papers will be marked down a whole letter grade if turned in after midnight, but before Tuesday's class. They will not be accepted if received after noon on Tuesday, resulting in a zero for that paper. Late research proposals and final research papers will be marked down a third of a grade (for ex. A to A-) for each 24 hour period after they are due. Thus, if a research paper proposal or research paper is turned in any time during the first 24 hours after it is due, it is penalized a third of a grade. Any paper not turned in within a week of the assigned due date will automatically receive a zero.

## **REQUIRED READINGS**

In this course, we read a combination of book chapters and journal articles. Links to articles and book chapters will be available through Blackboard. We read multiple chapters from a few books. They are:

Cox, Gary. 1997. *Making Votes Count*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Helmke, Gretchen. 2017. *Institutions on the Edge*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

You can either access them as e-copies from UR library or else purchase wherever you get new or used books.

---

## **Academic Honesty Policy**

All assignments and activities associated with this course must be performed in accordance with the University of Rochester's Academic Honesty Policy. More information is available at: [www.rochester.edu/college/honesty](http://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty)

*In this course, the following additional requirements are in effect:* You are encouraged to discuss course readings with your fellow students. However, all written work – response papers, research proposal and research paper – must be done independently and not in collaboration with another person, outside of Professor Meguid or Writing Fellows acting in their official capacity. For this course, AI, such as Chat GPT, may NOT be used. Use of AI *at any stage* in the writing process will be considered cheating (bust spelling and grammar checkers are ok). Not only does use of AI undermine the pedagogical purpose of the assignment, but be aware that AI is prone to “hallucinating,” creating sources that do not exist, in addition to producing vague and unsatisfying papers.

---

## **Disability Resources**

The University of Rochester respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities. In the event you encounter any barrier(s) to full participation in this course due to the impact of disability, please contact the Office of Disability Resources. The access coordinators in the Office of Disability Resources can meet with you to discuss the barriers you are experiencing and explain the eligibility process for establishing academic accommodations. You can reach the Office of Disability Resources at: [http://disability@rochester.edu](mailto:disability@rochester.edu); (585) 276-5075; Taylor Hall.

## **Illness**

I encourage all students to communicate with me as promptly as possible any concerns they have about missing class for illness/quarantine and for meeting class deadlines. The goal of this class is to remain as rigorous and fair as possible, while also allowing for enough flexibility for students to do their best work despite issues arising from illness.

## **CLASS SCHEDULE**

### **Week 1: January 21: Introduction to the Course and Introduction to Democratic Concepts**

Dahl, Robert A. 2006. *A Preface to Democratic Theory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 3.

Mansbridge, Jane. 2003. "Rethinking Representation," *APSR* 97: 515-528.

### **PART I: Comparative Democratic Institutions**

#### **Week 2: January 28: Political Parties**

Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper and Brothers. Chapter 2.

Aldrich, John. 1995. *Why Parties?* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1-2.

Stokes, Susan et al. 2013. *Brokers, Voters and Clientelism*. New York: Cambridge UP. Ch 1 and 7

#### **Week 3: February 4: Party System Formation**

Lipset, Seymour and Stein Rokkan. 1990. "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: An Introduction." In Peter Mair (ed) *The West European Party System*. Oxford: Oxford UP. 91-138.

Inglehart, Ronald. 1977. *The Silent Revolution*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 2.

Bates, Robert H. 1983. "Modernization, Ethnic Competition and the Rationality of Politics in Contemporary Africa." In *State versus Ethnic Claims: African Policy Dilemmas*. Eds. Donald Rothchild and Victor Olorunsola. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 152-171.

Neto, Octavio and Gary Cox. 1997. "Electoral Institutions, Cleavage Structures and the Number of Parties." *American Journal of Political Science*. 41(1): 149-174.

#### **Week 4: February 11: Electoral Rules: Shaping the Party System**

Fujiwara, Thomas. 2011. "A Regression Discontinuity Test of Strategic Voting and Duverger's Law." *QJPS*. 6: 197-233.

Fortin-Rittberger, Jessica and Berthold Rittberger. 2014. "Do electoral rules matter? Explaining national differences in women's representation in the European Parliament." *European Union Politics*. 15(4): 496-520.

Boix, Carles. 1999. "Setting the Rules of the Game." *American Political Science Review* 93(3).

McElwain, Kenneth Mori. 2008. "Manipulating Electoral Rules to Manufacture Single-Party Dominance." *AJPS*. 52(1): 32-47.

#### **No Class on February 18**

A short writing assignment for all students will be announced

#### **Week 5: February 25: Party Strategy: Setting the Ideological Agenda**

Riker, William. 1982. *Liberalism against Populism*. Prospect Heights: Waveland Press. 197-232.

Miller, Gary and Norman Schofield. 2003. "Activists and Partisan Realignment in the United States." *American Political Science Review*. 97(2): 245-260.

Budge, Ian and Dennis Farlie. 1983. "Party Competition- Selective Emphasis or Direct Confrontation?" in *Western European Party Systems: Continuity and Change*. eds. Hans Daalder and Peter Mair. London: Sage Publications. 267-306.

De Sio, Lorenzo, Andrea De Angelis, and Vincenzo Emanuele. 2018. "Issue Yield and Party Strategy in Multiparty Competition." *Comparative Political Studies*. 51(9): 1208-38.

#### **Week 6: March 4: Party Strategy: Programmatic Positioning**

\*\* *Research Proposal Due by 5pm on March 7*

Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper and Row. Chapters 7-8.

Somer-Topcu, Zeynep. 2015. "Everything to Everyone: The Electoral Consequences of the Broad-Appeal Strategy in Europe." *AJPS*. 59.4(October): 841-54.

Petrocik, John R. 1996. "Issue Ownership in Presidential Elections, with a 1980 Case Study." *American Journal of Political Science* 40: 825-50

Meguid, Bonnie M. 2008. *Party Competition between Unequals*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP. Chapters 1 and 2 \* the book is available as an electronic copy from the library.

### **March 11 – no class for Spring Break**

### **Week 7: March 18: Parliamentary Government Formation, Survival and Termination**

Martin, Lanny and Randy Stevenson. 2001. "Government Formation in Parliamentary Democracies." *AJPS*. 45.1(January): 33-50.

Warwick, Paul and James Druckman. 2006. "The Portfolio Allocation Paradox: An Investigation into the Nature of a Very Strong but Puzzling Relationship." *EJPR*. 45(4) 635-65.

Lupia, Arthur and Kaare Strøm. 1995. "Coalition Termination and the Strategic Timing of Parliamentary Elections," *American Political Science Review* 89(3): 648-669.

Martínez-Gallardo, Cecilia. 2012. "Out of the Cabinet: What Drives Defections From the Government in Presidential Systems?" *CPS*. 45.1(January): 62-90.

### **Week 9: March 25: Divided Power, Presidentialism and Federalism**

Helmke, Gretchen. 2017. *Institutions on the Edge*. New York: Cambridge UP. Chapters 1-4

Erik Wibbels, "Madison in Baghdad? Decentralization and Federalism in Comparative Politics," *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 9: 165-188.

## **PART II: Comparative Behavior**

### **Week 10: April 1: Issue Voting**

Rabinowitz, George and Elaine Macdonald. 1989. "A Directional Theory of Issue Voting." *American Political Science Review* 83(1): 93-121.

Petrocik, John R. 1996. "Issue Ownership in Presidential Elections, with a 1980 Case Study." *American Journal of Political Science* 40: 825-50

Bélanger, Éric and Bonnie M. Meguid. 2008. "Issue Salience, Issue Ownership, and Issue-based Vote Choice." *Electoral Studies*, 27 (3): 477-91.

Hall, Peter A. and Noam Gidron. 2017. "The politics of social status: economic and cultural roots of the populist right." *British Journal of Sociology*. 68(S1)

### **Week 11: April 8: Economic and Retrospective Voting**

Duch, Raymond M. and Randy Stevenson. 2006. "Assessing the magnitude of the economic vote over time and across nations." *Electoral Studies*.

Samuels, David. 2004. "Presidentialism and Accountability for the Economy in Comparative Perspective." *American Political Science Review* 98(3): 425-436.

Kayser, Mark and Michael Peress. 2012. "Benchmarking across Borders: Electoral Accountability and the Necessity of Comparison." *APSR* 106 (3): 661-84.

Nichter, Simeon and Michael Peress. 2016. "Request Fulfilling: When Citizens Demand Clientelist Benefits." *CPS*. 1-32.

### **Week 12: April 15: Strategic and Expressive Voting**

Cox, Gary. 1997. *Making Votes Count*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1-7

Kedar, Orit. 2005. "When Moderate Voters Prefer Extreme Parties: Policy Balancing in Parliamentary Elections." *American Political Science Review* 99(2): 185-199.

Schuessler, Alexander A. 2000. "Expressive Voting." *Rationality and Society*. 12(1)

### **Week 13: April 22: Turnout and Vote Buying**

Aldrich, John. 1993. "Rational Choice and Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science* 37(1): 246-278.

Bendor, Jonathan, Daniel Diermeier and Michael Ting. 2003. "A Behavioral Model of Turnout." *American Political Science Review* 97(2): 261-280.

Helmke, Gretchen and Bonnie M. Meguid. 2008. "Endogenous Institutions: The Origins of Compulsory Voting Laws." Unpublished manuscript.

Kasara, Kimuli, and Pavithra Suryanarayan. 2015. "When Do the Rich Vote Less Than the Poor and Why? Explaining Turnout Inequality Across the World." *AJPS* 59 (3): 613–627.

**Week 14: April 29: Representation, Responsiveness and Accountability**

Powell, G. Bingham. 2000. *Elections as Instruments of Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Chapters 1, 2 and 6.

Stokes, Susan. 2001. *Mandates and Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Ch 1

Thomson, Robert et al. "The Fulfillment of Parties' Election Pledges: A Comparative Study on the Impact of Power Sharing." *American Journal of Political Science* 61.3 (2017): 527–542.

\*\*Research Paper due May 5 by 5pm